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SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION: PRESIDENT BUSH'S VISIT TO THE  
MIDDLE EAST

11. SUMMARY:

A columnist in Al-Bayan believes that Israel will continue to influence American presidents toward igniting international wars after President Bush leaves.

An editorial in Gulf News considers President Bush's visit as an attempt to salvage his administration's reputation in the Middle East.

The editor-at-large for Gulf News doubts that President Bush will fulfill his wish to be recorded in history as the U.S. leader who resolved the Palestine-Israel issue, unless he takes a much firmer line with Israel than any previous American president has ever dared to do.

A columnist in Al-Khaleej calls on Arabs not to pin their hopes on Bush's visit to the Middle East. He suggests that President Bush is concerned with peace in the region only to the extent that it will contribute to saving the reputation of the Republican party during the forthcoming presidential elections.

A columnist in Al-Khaleej opines that Bush's visit will be consonant with an Israeli plan, and therefore that it cannot result in peace nor end Israeli aggression.

The editorial in Al-Bayan states that since President Bush unconditionally adopts Israel's policies, there is no value to his visit. End Summary.

12. Under the headline "American Militarization," a columnist, Ahmed Omarabi, wrote in 01/10/08 "Al-Bayan":

"At the end of this year, Bush will leave after having fulfilled his 'duty.' Still, the Jewish Zionist movement and the mass makers of weapons (such as Boeing, McDonnell Douglas, General Dynamics and others) will continue to influence Bush's successor towards igniting international wars. Thus military aggression and not diplomatic, peaceful reconciliation will set the direction of America's foreign policy, regardless of the sequence of its presidents."

13. Under the headline "Bush is Trying to Leave a Mark for His

Legacy," the 01/10 editorial in Dubai-based English Daily Gulf News (circulation 100,000):

"After he leaves office, Bush is determined to be remembered by history as the U.S. leader who resolved the Palestine-Israel issue. But time is running out for him as he only has until the end of the year."

"This is why this visit to the Middle East, and anything else he does during the remainder of his term is unlikely to succeed unless a much firmer line is taken with Israel than any previous American president has ever dared to do."

"But as that is likely to be a vote-loser for the Republican Party, whoever their candidate is, it is improbable that it will be pursued for fear of losing the American Jewish vote."

14. Under the headline "An Attempt to Salvage Something", the Editor at Large, Francis Mathew, wrote 01/10 in Dubai-based English daily Gulf News (circulation 100,000):

"For an American president who started with very little foreign policy experience, Bush has done more in the Middle East than any of his predecessors, unfortunately not for the better."

"This week's trip will be an attempt to salvage something and an admission that the Middle East is too important to simply ignore."

15. Under the headline "Awaiting Bush's Visit", a columnist, Fahmi Huwaidi, wrote 01/08 op-ed in "Al-Khaleej":(circulation 90,000):

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"I pity those who are pinning their hopes on the arrival of President Bush to the region tomorrow because current signs show that the man is not coming for the region's sake and is not concerned about the region."

"Bush gave guarantees to Israel and responded to Sharon's request, and then adopted the idea of a Palestinian state that serves the interests of Israel... The American President is concerned with the cause of peace in the region only to the extent that it contributes toward saving the reputation of his Republican party during the forthcoming presidential elections. After all, the Republicans have reached their lowest levels. He is trying to build hopes that he will succeed in foreign policy after his domestic policies have utterly failed."

16. Under the headline "About Bush's Tour", a columnist, Jaafar Mohamed Ahmed, wrote 01/08 op-ed in "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 90,000):

"Bush comes to the region while he is fully aware that his administration is mired in the quagmires of his foreign wars and in major internal economic problems. It is clear that the visit is meant to legitimize [Bush and the White House], especially after [their] failure in Iraq and Afghanistan. They are hoping that the visit will add some success to Annapolis' limited outcome, make the Israelis more responsive toward abandoning their settlements, and decrease their denial of the relevant international resolutions."

"Prior to Bush's visit, we can already see pools of blood in Iraq, and Israel's bloody wave of violence targeting dozens of Palestinians and expansion of settlements. Nothing comes out of Washington except silence; this shows U.S. is satisfied with and accepts their actions. Bush's visit, if complying with the Israeli plan, will never find real peace in light of the continuation of aggressive Israeli practices."

17. Under the headline "Bush's Visit: No Room for Anonymity", the 01/08 editorial in Dubai-based Arabic daily "Al-Bayan" (circulation 85,000) read:

"Bush's speech on the eve of his visit to the region legitimated Israel's continued settlement building. Bush did this intentionally: he sent this anonymous message to detect whether Olmert and Abbas are really considering putting in greater effort toward reaching an agreement."

"If Bush wants to adopt Israel's policies unconditionally, then there is no value to Bush's visit".

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